

[REDACTED]

Kareem Topic Proposal

For my NHD project, I am planning to research the impact Kareem Abdul-Jabbar has left on the United States, and how he changed the course of history. Many know Kareem as one of the best and most talented basketball players, who played on some of the most successful teams in NBA history. What many do not know is that Kareem was arguably an even more influential Civil Rights Activist.

For this project, I plan on making a documentary project with [REDACTED]. We will make a video discussing the effect Kareem's activism has had on the US, and provide important information regarding how he began and continued his activism from college into retirement.

In terms of our research question, it will be something along the lines of “in what ways did Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's activism reflect or challenge the prevailing social and political trends of his era, and how did this impact the trajectory of the civil rights movement in the United States?”. Another possible research question is “How has Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's legacy influenced contemporary social justice movements, including the Black Lives Matter movement, and what can be learned from his activism for current and future activist efforts in the U.S.?”.

To further develop the story of Kareem's activism, it's important that we give some background information for our historical figure. Kareem was a legendary basketball player that had been a superstar in college and the NBA. He is not only renowned for his accomplishments on the court but also for his significant contributions in the fight against institutional racism and his efforts to transform America. He worked alongside numerous other athletes and other activists in order to protest the discrimination minorities faced in America. Kareem used his influence to make an impact outside of sports.

The decision to choose this topic was rooted in my love for sports. As a basketball player myself, I already knew a lot about Kareem as a player, and a little bit about his efforts outside of the game. However I didn't truly understand just how influential Kareem has been for our country. As I've begun to research more and more about Kareem, I've gained a lot of respect for not just him as a player, but specifically as a person. I hope to learn more about Kareem's inspiration and motivation to create a positive impact on society. I am also interested in learning more about his life after basketball, and how he continued his activism in his retirement from the sport.

For my sources, I am planning on using Kareem's documentary "On The Shoulders Of Giants"¹, which he helped direct and narrate himself. This documentary focuses beyond Kareem's life beyond the sport, and I'm expecting a lot of personal insight on his thoughts and emotions, as well as his passion for activism. Another source I will be using for historical context is the historical event to commemorate the Cleveland Summit of 1967. ²I will be watching a video of athletes and activists speaking about the event. I hope to get an idea of what happened from those who attended, and how the event created the ideas which would guide athletes to create change. My last 2 sources will be JSTOR articles which hopefully analyze Kareem's effect on a broader scale starting with explaining how he started his journey of activism, how it impacted his career, and how his efforts left a lasting legacy. One looks at the discrimination he faced in college³, and the other analyzes how he grew as an activist throughout his career.⁴

¹ On the shoulders of Giants. United States: OSG Productions, 2011.

² "NBA, City Leaders Dedicate Historical Marker at Site of Famous 1967 Cleveland Summit." YouTube, June 17, 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YeEsSdgRmLY>.

³ Smith, John Matthew. "'It's Not Really My Country': Lew Alcindor and the Revolt of the Black Athlete." *Journal of Sport History* 36, no. 2 (2009): 223–44. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26405188>.

⁴ GOUDSOUZIAN, ARAM. "From Lew Alcindor to Kareem Abdul-Jabbar: Race, Religion, and Representation in Basketball, 1968–1975." *Journal of American Studies* 51, no. 2 (2017): 437–70. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26426105>.